

# LOUISIANA TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

USDA CONFERENCE ROOM

ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA

SEPTEMBER 13, 2005

## RECORD OF AGENDA ITEMS AND COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Donald Gohmert, NRCS State Conservationist, opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m., and welcomed the meeting participants. (See attendance list attached.) Each member introduced themselves to the committee.

Ron Marcantel, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist, passed out copies of the last committee meeting minutes. The minutes were approved as recommended by the committee.

### ◆ ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP)

Ron Marcantel, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, reported on the EQIP FY-05 Program. In Louisiana 3,195 applications were ranked. The state allocation for EQIP was \$14,540,525. Ground and surface water allocation was \$364,352. Conservation Innovation Grant obligated \$75,000 on one grant. Total state EQIP allocation was \$14,529,009. An EQIP subcommittee meeting was held on August 16; Ron reviewed the minutes with the committee. The changes under conservation include:

1. NRCS is presently providing financial assistance to participants using "AM" defined as – actual cost not to exceed a specified maximum cost. NRCS is considering changing from "AM" to "AC" defined as average cost.
2. Removing cost share assistance for "big gun" sprinklers. National policy does not allow for NRCS to cost share on mobile distribution equipment relating to waste utilization.
3. Removing cost share assistance for Land Smoothing. NRCS provided cost share assistance for land smoothing only when land smoothing would reduce soil erosion by 30% or more. The purpose listed in Land Smoothing practice standard, as defined in the Field Office Technical Guide, is for improving surface drainage relating to excess surface water from rainfall or irrigation. Land Smoothing is not a conservation practice used for soil erosion.
4. Cost share assistance would be added for reforestation of long leaf pine only within historical long leaf pine sites.
5. Incentive payments would be added for the adoption of precision agriculture relating to nutrient management (application of nutrients and lime) on cropland.

6. Cost share assistance for the application of lime, phosphorus and potassium on pasture and hayland would be changed to provide cost share for lime only.
7. Remove incentive payments for pest management.
8. Remove incentive payments for nutrient management except for nutrient management relating to precision agriculture.
9. Providing cost share assistance for the establishment of permanent, perennial vegetation on annually tilled pastureland and hayland (addressing pastures and hayland fields that are management for the production of crabgrass and ryegrass.) Cost share would not be allowed on fields having an existing stand of perennial grasses equal to or greater than 30%.

**TAC recommendation:**

The consensus of the full TAC recommends to the State Conservationist to accept the recommendations of the EQIP Subcommittee on the changes for the program for FY-06.

**TAC recommendation:**

The consensus of the full TAC recommends to the State Conservationist to accept the recommendations of the EQIP Subcommittee on an inclusion of micro-irrigation setting a cap of 10 acres with an average cost of \$4400 an acre.

**♦ WETLANDS RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)**

Ron Marcantel reported on the WRP FY-05 Program. In Louisiana, 596 offers have been received. Of that 544 easements have been recorded and closed for a total of 204,794 acres. The total acres restored are 144,797.

A WRP subcommittee meeting was held on August 16; Ron reviewed the minutes with the committee. There was a recommendation to adopt the new Black Bear Habitat Maps.

**TAC recommendation:**

- The consensus of the full TAC recommends to the State Conservationist to accept the recommendations of the WRP Subcommittee to adopt the new Black Bear Habitat Maps.

Compatible use authorization are granted for all types of activities, such as mowing wildlife trails, wildlife openings, firebreaks, and commercial crawfish. Discussions have come up that commercial crawfishers have concerns with compatible use authorizations for crawfish.

**TAC recommendation:**

Accepted  
DWH

- The consensus of the full TAC recommends to the WRP Subcommittee to hold another subcommittee meeting to further discuss shallow water area water depths and to bring their recommendations back to the full TAC for their recommendations.

**TAC recommendation:**

Accepted  
DWH

- The consensus of the full TAC recommends to the State Conservationist to change the shallow water area water depths not to exceed 12 inches excluding swalling.

Andy Dolan, USFWS, requested American Sycamore, Live Oak and Eastern Red Cedar to be added to the WRP Tree Species List. There was not any opposition to this as long as they are historically found in the watershed.

**TAC recommendation:**

Accepted  
DWH

- The consensus of the full TAC recommends to the State Conservationist to add American Sycamore, Live Oak and Eastern Red Cedar to the WRP Tree Species List.

**♦ WILDLIFE HABITAT INCENTIVES PROGRAM (WHIP)**

Ron Marcantel reported on the WHIP FY-05 Program. In Louisiana, the allocation was \$503,821, of which 63 of 64 contracts have been written.

A WHIP subcommittee meeting was held on August 17; Ron reviewed the minutes with the committee.

**TAC recommendation:**

Accepted  
DWH

- The consensus of the full TAC recommends to the State Conservationist that eligibility for ponds be changed to reflect that cost-share is eligible regardless of distance to existing permanent water and increase the cost-share from a maximum of \$2,000 per pond to a maximum of \$3,000 per pond.

**TAC recommendation:**

Accepted  
DWH

The consensus of the full TAC recommends to the State Conservationist to increase the state cap from \$20,000 to \$40,000 per WHIP contract.

After a discussion on cost sharing for early water flooding, it was decided to call a meeting of the WHIP Subcommittee to further discuss this issue and provide recommendations to the TAC.

◆ **GRASSLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (GRP)**

Ron Marcantel reported on the GRP FY-05 Program. In Louisiana, there were 19 new contracts obligating \$180,570 for a total of 1,707.9 acres.

A GRP subcommittee meeting was held on August 17; Ron reviewed the minutes with the committee.

◆ **CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM (CSP)**

Ron Marcantel reported on the CSP FY-05 Program. In Louisiana, 39 contracts funded for \$2,292,380 for a total of 19,176 acres.

For FY 2006, National Headquarters announced the CSP watersheds for Louisiana which are Red Chute and Tickfaw Watersheds. Due to the hurricane, Tickfaw has been heavily impacted. Tensas is under consideration for replacement of Tickfaw.

A CSP subcommittee meeting was held on August 16; Ron reviewed the minutes with the committee.

Another CSP Subcommittee meeting in early October will be called to discuss the cost and practices relating to these two CSP watersheds.

◆ **CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (CREP)**

Ron Marcantel reported on the CREP for FY-06. The program will be aimed for southwest Louisiana. Two million dollars is matched as a pledge for the program. A meeting on the program will be held in October.

**Next Meeting Date** – No meeting date was set. Members will be notified when the date is scheduled.

12: 23 p.m. – Meeting Adjourned

*Donald W. Golbert* 9/29/05  
Chairman Date

Louisiana State Technical Advisory Committee

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**USDA CONFERENCE ROOM**

**ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA**

**SEPTEMBER 13, 2005**

**LIST OF ATTENDEES**

Donald Gohmert, USDA-NRCS  
Ron Marcantel, USDA-NRCS  
Aaron Hinkston, USDA-NRCS  
Tim Landreneau, USDA-NRCS  
Cheryl Turbeville, USDA-NRCS  
Van Kozak, USEPA  
Cal Baker, USFS  
Dr. Jay Huner, LA Wildlife Federation  
Steve Minvielle, LCFA  
Donna Morgan, LSU AgCenter  
Andy Dolan, USFWS  
Jess Barr, LA Cotton Association  
Jimmy Lyles, Southern Services  
Robbie Howard, DU  
Jeff Parham, LDEQ  
Charlotte Clavier, LA Thoroughbred Breeders Association